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Dockets Management Branch (HFA-305)
Food and Drug Administration
5630 Fishers Lane, Room 1061
Rockville, MD 20852

I am writing in response to the FDA's request for public comments on reducing egg borne diseases relative to the many illnesses and deaths caused by contaminated eggs:

One of the main causes of illness in hens is the practice of forced molting. This practice intentionally starves hens for up to 14 days – 2 weeks! – to manipulate egg production. This forced molting is so stressful that it destroys the hens' immune system (exactly as it would a human's, obviously) and predisposes the birds and their eggs to salmonella poison and other bacterial and viral diseases.

The USDA's own Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) has formally recognized the public health concerns raised by forced molting, stating that extended starvation and water deprivation practices lead to increased shedding of Salmonella enteritidis by Laying hens subjected to these practices.

Finally, though this is obviously not a concern of USFDA, forced molting of hens is cruel and immoral because the birds are made to suffer terribly in the process. While USFDA doesn't mind this, the public is increasingly aware of this and DOES object to this aspect of the forced molting practice. The US lags FAR behind the other civilized, modern countries in its treatment of food animals.

PLEASE BAN THE FORCED MOLTING OF LAYING HENS.

Sincerely,

Mary Jo Brooks

98P-0203

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